

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) An endoscopic sample taker for collecting a sample of cartilage material, comprising:

a hollow shank having a distal end and a proximal end;

a scoop fixedly connected to said distal end of said hollow shank and defining a trough, wherein an opening of said trough at least partially faces said proximal end of said hollow shank;

a handling means connected at said proximal end of said hollow shaft and having an actuation mechanism;

an actuating rod having a distal end and a proximal end axially movable in said hollow shank, said ~~distal~~ proximal end of said actuating rod releasably connectable with said actuation mechanism; and

a covering fastened proximate said distal end of said actuating rod, said covering being displaceable via said actuating rod between a closure position and an open position, wherein said open position of said covering allows ingress of the cartilage material to said trough and said closure position covers said trough to prevent loss of the cartilage material from said trough.

9. (previously presented) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 8, wherein said covering comprises a metal tongue.

10. (currently amended) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 8, wherein said trough comprises an edge having a circumferential shape and said covering has a circumferential shape that corresponds to said circumferential shape of said edge of said trough.

11. (previously presented) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 8, further comprising a holding-down device for guiding said covering during the displacement thereof and holding said covering at said closure position.

12. (previously presented) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 8, wherein said scoop comprises an edge forming said trough and said edge is inclined at an angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said hollow shank.

13. (previously presented) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 12, wherein said covering is made of a bendable elastic material.

14. (previously presented) The endoscopic sample taker of claim 1, wherein said covering comprises a front cutting edge for facilitating separation of the sample of cartilage material.